

The role of emotion in teaching: are there differences between male and female newly qualified teachers' approaches to teaching?

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Emotions play a crucial role in communication and engagement between people. This paper focuses on the extent to which new teachers consider and value the emotional component of teaching for the engagement and motivation of their students and themselves. Moreover, drawing on the literature on gender and emotion, which consistently cites females of all ages as having a greater capacity to empathise, we looked to see if female teachers are better equipped at engaging their students and whether there are differences in the emotional teaching styles of male and female newly qualified teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. Analysis of questionnaires revealed significant gender difference in approaches to teaching and perceptions of it, and led us to pursue this issue further by interviewing a selection of the teachers. Teachers' comments reflected differences between men and women in the ways they visualise the role of emotion in teaching. When faced with challenges and adversities in the classroom, such as disruptive and disengaged students, they employ different strategies to combat them, and typically, female teachers would go to greater lengths, often employing emotion tactics to re-engage students. The research highlights the importance of focusing on emotional engagement in teaching, the consequences for teacher retention and implications for teacher training.

Keywords: emotion; teaching; gender; motivation; students; learning

Introduction

Individual learning involves mind, body and emotions and is embedded in social and physical situations and practice. Emotions play a crucial role in communication and engagement between people. They act as a catalyst for expression and learning, and research in fields as diverse as cognitive psychology (Bandura 1997; Vygotsky 1997), neuropsychology (Damasio 1994; Ledoux 1989), critical theory (Giroux 1997), feminist studies (Boler 1999) and educational philosophy (Noddings 1992) suggests that there is an inherent interplay between cognition and emotion. Likewise, the field of education has also extolled the virtues of emotionality through its ability to consolidate cognitive scaffolding of concepts and teaching strategies (Hargreaves 1998). Indeed, Palmer (1998, 66) spoke of the separation of the head from the heart as contributing to an educational system filled with broken paradoxes that result in "minds that do not know how to feel and hearts that do not know how to think".

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Emotion in teaching

John Dewey (1933, 189) wrote of the necessity to address students' emotions in education: "...There is no education when ideas and knowledge are not translated into emotion, interest, and volition". More recently, the field of education has begun to acknowledge the importance of emotional intelligence and encourage a focus beyond that of the acquisition of content knowledge. A number of researchers suggest that teachers' work includes dealing with students' affective, as well as cognitive, response to the subject matter being taught, as teachers frequently need to anticipate students' emotional responses to specific topics and tasks (e.g. Demetriou and Wilson 2009; Frijda 2000; Nias 1996). The claim that is made by such researchers is that taking emotions into account will provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' learning and thinking.

Hargreaves (2000, 2005) emphasises the importance of harbouring close relationships between new teachers and their colleagues and students, and warns that, without such relationships, teachers are prone to experience emotional misunderstanding. A study by Lasky (2005) found that teachers often struggle to remain openly vulnerable with their students, and to create trusting learning environments in what they described as an increasingly managerial profession with increased accountability pressures. These teachers described being willingly vulnerable with their students because of a belief that student learning and socio-emotional development benefited from this openness. The willingness to blur the boundaries between the personal and professional with their students was a core component of their teacher identity, reflecting their fundamental beliefs about how to teach students effectively by building rapport, being human and by grasping hold of unplanned teachable moments.

However, it is not only important to examine the effect of students' emotional responses. Teachers' emotional responses to their pupils and the extent to which they engage with the affective dimensions of the subject knowledge involved are also important. For example, Zembylas (2002, 2005) has shown that the emotions of science teachers influenced how they organised their curriculum and teaching. He claimed that teachers' emotional experiences and reflection upon their emotions are inextricably linked to their pedagogy. Likewise, a study by Gulnar (2003) examined the degree to which the emotions experienced by science teachers influence their practice. The study observed and interviewed a physics and a chemistry teacher and audiotaped their classes in order to understand their feelings and thoughts. Of the two teachers, the physics teacher used significantly more instructional strategies, varied his strategies and was more metacognitive about his instruction than the chemistry teacher. Realising that his students were not coping with his learning and behavioural challenges, the physics teacher lowered his expectations, slowed down his instruction and used more repetition. This fine-tuning of his lessons reflected this teacher's beliefs in building a strong rapport with his students and shifted the onus on the teacher to change his approach rather than become irritated with and consequently blame the students for their lack of progress. The teacher reconstructed his practice accordingly, making jokes, using humour and sometimes tolerating misbehaviours. By sharp contrast, the chemistry teacher became upset, angry, frustrated and discouraged by the students' lack of progress, which resulted in less effective communication and ultimately a lack of enthusiasm for learning amongst his pupils.

The relationship between emotion and cognition in teaching was investigated by Baird et al. (2007). They involved 33 teachers and more than 2000 students from six schools and examined the roles of emotion and learning in the classroom context and their effect on teaching and learning. Their findings revealed the importance of a balance between affect and cognition for effective teaching and learning. Baird et al. suggest that rather than purely trying to communicate the facts in a rote fashion, teachers who connected with students in their classes through incorporating more emotion and expression in their teaching, thereby making it more interesting and enticing, were more successful in communicating the subject matter and keeping students engaged. Moreover, the affective means by which teachers communicated their subject resulted in students becoming more interested in the subject and consequently being more successful at it.

Logan and Skamp (2007) took a longitudinal qualitative approach to investigate the reasons why children's interest in science declines with age. The study traced 20 students over the course of two years and revealed the importance of the teacher's pedagogical approach and classroom environment in determining the extent to which students were engaged in the subject. In particular, teachers who empathised with their students, predominantly through listening to them and heeding the feedback provided through actively listening to student voice, emerged as a crucial factor in addressing the decline in students' attitudes and interest in science.

Notwithstanding these studies, there is a paucity of research in the area. The literature on teaching often emphasises the importance of teachers' feelings and their impact on teaching and learning. However, more remains to be done to address the affective component in research on teaching and learning. Having written about this elsewhere (see Demetriou and Wilson 2009), our data alerted us to the seemingly different ways that newly qualified male and female teachers approached their teaching and in this study, we examine the interplay of emotion and the teacher's gender, and the implications for teaching and learning. Before we embark on the details of the study, we shall discuss a selection of the literature on gender differences in emotion.

Emotion and gender

The literature typically and consistently cites women as possessing and exhibiting greater emotion than men. Even at young ages, girls and boys have been shown to differ in their capacity to demonstrate and appreciate emotion. For example, Zahn-Waxler et al. (1992a) found that at 12–30 months, girls participated to a greater degree in others' affective states, and at 14–20 months, girls have been shown to demonstrate more concern and self-distress than boys (Zahn-Waxler et al. 1992b). Hoffman (1977) claimed that two- to three-year-old girls display more empathic responses in the form of vicarious affect – which is the apprehension and experiencing of another's emotional state or condition (Stotland 1969) – than boys. Eisenberg et al. (1989) suggested that facial sadness and self-reports of emotion were increasingly related amongst young girls, whilst boys experienced less vicarious emotional responsiveness and made greater efforts than girls to hide or deny their emotional responsiveness. By adulthood, women are purported to exhibit greater empathy than men (e.g. Baron-Cohen 2003). Using a powerful argument that encompasses biological, physiological and sociological perspectives, Baron-Cohen (2003) has argued that the differences between the male and female brain are distinct and unalterable and that males, possibly as a result of

cultural and societal norms, tend to internalise their emotions in contrast to women, who externalise to a greater degree.

Aims

We are looking at the extent to which new teachers consider and value the emotional component of teaching for the engagement and motivation of their students and themselves. Moreover, given the findings above, this study investigates whether differences exist between male and female teachers' approaches to their teaching, and the extent to which their emotional responses to pupils, and to the subject matter, may affect pupils' motivation and learning through the choice of teaching methods employed. Hence, in ascertaining whether men and women do approach teaching differently, and whether, for instance, female teachers do invest more time in trying to engage and motivate their students, we have aimed to probe for differences in teaching approaches.

Methodology

Survey

The survey data are drawn from two survey instruments, completed by two cohorts of teachers, between which there was some limited overlap. Our choice of teachers in these two groups was principled, as we were interested primarily in examining how graduates of our own teacher education courses continue to develop when qualified, and how the environments within which they teach may facilitate that development.

The first instrument (see Appendix 1) was completed by 305 early career teachers involved in a study concerning retention of secondary school science teachers. Questionnaires were sent to all the science teachers who had obtained their postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE: a UK qualification conferring qualified teacher status) from 1997 to 2003 from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. These 305 teachers, who ranged from relatively newly qualified to being in the profession for eight years, completed a questionnaire about aspects of teaching. Reading through the questionnaires revealed some poignant accounts by new teachers, some of who had found their early experiences of teaching to be difficult and challenging, to the point that some had decided to leave the career completely.

The second instrument (see Appendix 2) was completed by 512 early career teachers. Questionnaires were sent to any school that had previously employed a teacher who had obtained their PGCE from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Within this questionnaire, we assessed a number of aspects of teachers' motivation using instruments developed within the framework of self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 2000). The scales were scored as advised within the appropriate publications listed below, and data were analysed non-parametrically, but with means presented for clarity. The data collection and analyses referred to below are presented more fully elsewhere (Winterbottom, Wilson, and Demetriou in prep.), but the similarities and differences between the scores of men and women teachers on these scales are relevant here.

The Basic Need Satisfaction at Work scale has been used most frequently (Baard, Deci, and Ryan 2004). Along with self-determination theory more generally, this draws on the idea that for optimal functioning, three sets of basic need must be met, namely competence, autonomy and relatedness, and examines them accordingly.

- We also drew on the perceived autonomy support scale (Baard, Deci, and Ryan 2004) to examine teachers' perceptions of their manager and the social environment at school in facilitating autonomy rather than control.
- The perceived competence scale (Deci et al. 1981) addresses teachers' feelings of competence about teaching; feelings of competence are conceptualised within self-determination theory to be important to goal attainment.
- We also used the general causality orientation scales (Deci and Ryan 1985) to assess the extent to which teachers themselves felt autonomous, controlled (by rewards, deadlines and directives for example), or the extent to which they felt that attaining desired outcomes was beyond their control.
- We employed the intrinsic motivation inventory (Deci et al. 1994), using two subscales from that inventory to assess: (1) effort and importance attributed to teaching, and (2) the extent to which the teachers felt pressure and tension.

Interview

Findings from the survey prompted us to select a small sample of teachers to interview. The 11 teachers that were chosen were affiliated to the Gatsby-funded project and had maintained close ties with the Faculty of Education. Some of the teachers were Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and some were Recently Qualified Teachers (RQTs). Whilst some of these teachers took up posts local to the university, others had started their teaching careers in London and the surrounding counties. The interview schedule (see Appendix 3) focuses on participants' first three years of teaching. Questions were directed at their relationships in school, communication with students, the ideal lesson, reflection, quality of teaching and the degree to which teachers felt that they were successful in communicating the subject matter to their students. We sought to gain in-depth information from the teachers, some of whom we met two or three times, in order to ascertain their progress during their early years of teaching.

Analysis of findings

Survey data

Within the group of 305 teachers, 192 (63%) were female and 113 (37%) were male. Significantly more teachers remained in teaching ($N = 134$) than had left the profession ($N = 171$): $\chi^2 = 34.04$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$. Of the teachers who continued to teach, 76 of the 134 (57%) were female and 58 (43%) were male. Overall, a chi-square test shows that there is no relationship between gender and the likelihood of leaving the profession. However, a year on year chi-square analysis revealed that females were significantly more likely to continue teaching for longer than their male counterparts having graduated in 2000: $\chi^2 = 4.50$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.034$; 2002: $\chi^2 = 6.48$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.011$; and 2003: $\chi^2 = 24.02$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$.

Of the larger data set comprising 512 teachers, 334 (65%) were female and 178 (35%) were male. We found no significant differences between male and female teachers on the Basic Need Satisfaction at Work scales (Baard, Deci, and Ryan 2004): competence, autonomy and relatedness. We also found no significant differences between the perceptions of male and female teachers on the perceived autonomy support scale (Baard, Deci, and Ryan 2004), or the perceived competence scale (Deci et al. 1981).

We also used the general causality orientation scales (Deci and Ryan 1985), to assess the extent to which teachers themselves felt autonomous, controlled (by rewards, deadlines and directives for example), or the extent to which they felt that attaining desired outcomes was beyond their control. There was a significant difference (Mann-Whitney $U = 18384$; $N_{\text{male}} = 160$, $N_{\text{female}} = 282$; $P = 0.001$) between men (mean = 24.99) and women (mean = 23.65) in the extent to which they felt controlled, and the extent to which they felt goal attainment was beyond their control (Mann-Whitney $U = 20386$; $N_{\text{male}} = 159$, $N_{\text{female}} = 290$; $P = 0.042$; mean_{male} = 20.89, mean_{female} = 21.84). There was no difference in the extent to which they felt autonomous. These results show that whereas men felt more controlled generally by the system, women emphasised that goal attainment was beyond their control.

Finally, we employed the intrinsic motivation inventory (Deci et al. 1994), using two subscales from that inventory to assess (1) effort and importance attributed to teaching, and (2) the extent to which the teachers felt pressure and tension. There was no significant difference in the latter between male and female teachers, but there was a difference in the extent to which men and women attributed effort and importance to teaching (Mann-Whitney $U = 22236$; $N_{\text{male}} = 174$, $N_{\text{female}} = 328$; $P < 0.001$; mean_{male} = 5.68, mean_{female} = 6.06). This finding reflects that women attributed more effort and importance to teaching than men.

These findings indicate that female teachers are somewhat more likely to stay in teaching for longer than their male counterparts. The findings from the second data set hint at a division between the emphasis that men and women teachers place on teaching: whereas male teachers are concerned about the system as a whole and the extent to which they are controlled, female teachers place a greater emphasis on the teaching itself. It could be that the way in which male and female teachers perceive teaching may explain their longevity in the profession.

Interview data

The teachers whom we interviewed spoke fully and frankly about their experiences of teaching and we present some of the findings that corroborate the quantitative data above and reflect differences in the ways that male and female teachers respond to the challenges they encounter.

Female teachers' student engagement

Female teachers talked about the importance of thinking about their teaching styles and analysing students' behaviour in an attempt to empathise with their students and bridge the gaps between them. In particular, being able to reflect regularly on their teaching seemed to help teachers understand and consolidate in their minds the dynamics between the students and themselves.

I think I'm probably still learning about myself and teaching. I think I am becoming more reflective. Looking at students and asking why they think it is okay to do certain things and why have you done that brilliantly – what has made you like that? So I start thinking about me and what made me do things and motivate and encourage me. (Female NQT)

Many of the teachers we spoke to emphasised the importance of effective communication with their students, especially when they were disengaged and disinterested in

learning. Indeed, these teachers worked hard in order to establish a good rapport with their students, and often witnessed positive outcomes:

There are a couple of groups that I'd wish I'd been stricter with to start with. But then you don't know. With those classes I don't have as much control, but I try to look at ways to get round that. (Female NQT)

One teacher reflected on the relationships she formed with her own teachers when she was at school and how these relationships helped her with her learning. She talked at length about the boundaries that she felt were permissible between herself and her students. She realised that, in doing so, she was able to engage the students more effectively:

When I was at school, I had good relationships with my teachers and I realise that I needed that – to be friendly with them. But my best friend did not need that – she felt awkward. So I leave it up to the students to see what they need from me. So you have the kids who are loud and when they come to you I really enjoy it. It's difficult to know where to draw the line – especially as I'm quite young... Or they will notice if I'm tired and ask how I am. I feel that I can trust them and tell them things and build a relationship that way. Being more social with them helps establish a rapport and helps with teaching. One girl really didn't want to do a task but when I asked her again, she said: "because it's you miss, I will do it". It's significant that if a class like you and they need to do something that is boring they will do it because it is you. That felt nice. (Female NQT)

I have a girl who wants to dance and I show an interest. I think that I can get through to my students through building a relationship. One girl has been showing me a baby outfit she's been designing in textiles. And she wanted to show it to me so she can show something that is good. And I don't know how I've done it, but just by being interested in things like that, they can talk to me. I go over the top sometimes. The girl has fluffy pens or wearing glitter: "that's beautiful, that's gorgeous – wow!!" Just be really energetic and positive about things and that makes you more approachable, you're not going to be cross and you're there to help. I don't think I've got that with all of them yet. But hopefully once one or two are on board the rest of their group realise it also. (Female NQT)

Another teacher felt immensely proud that in her two short years of teaching, she had changed her students' perceptions of science for the better. This same teacher attributed much of her success with her students to the rapport she had established with them, although she was keen to emphasise that it was important for her not to lose grasp of authority:

And they say "what, you go home and do stuff – what did you do at the weekend Miss?" Saying that, I am very strict... But on the back of my door I have equipment things and if they don't have them, I put them in detention and they are quite scared. And with uniform, I just don't take any nonsense. They say "why do you stick to the rules every time?" and I say that that is my job and they say "okay!" It's a bit like you're performing when you're in the classroom. (Female RQT)

This teacher went on to say that she had learnt a lot in her first year, due mostly to working independently. She felt that a constant reflection on her practice and trying new approaches in order to improve had helped her. As a consequence, she felt that she had established firm relationships with her students and that as a result they had made good progress:

... And I'm proud of them and I'll be sad at the end of the year to give them up because you work so hard with them and you get to know every kid individually ... Because I make a massive effort to get to know all the kids in all my classes. It pays off in terms of behaviour... (Female RQT)

Some teachers had learnt very early on in their careers that it was simply not enough to merely regurgitate lessons in a rote fashion. It was important for them to consider aspects such as the time and the day of the lesson in question and the students' interest in the subject – all of which could determine their motivation. In such instances, it was important for these teachers to take the perspective of their students in order to engage them. One teacher employed a diagram that she had created herself in order to facilitate the learning of the periodic table and explained:

... this makes it more fun because it's more creative and different. And then I check their timetable and half of them have been in period 4 – in dance – before my lesson. So that affects them. I think though that despite that you should have an environment set up in your classroom no matter what time it is. They won't do serious book work/or brand new work, but on the other hand you can't let that slide because they might take it for granted. But that group will appreciate that I will put the radio on or something while they are doing some questions. And they will often then get down to working harder in the next lesson, knowing that the previous lesson was lighter. That makes up for it and they are good like that. (Female NQT)

Patience, perspective-taking and an ability to tailor the lesson to the students' needs were often an integral part of the teaching approaches adopted by some of the female teachers we spoke to.

... in the classroom, something happens to me and I become patient. And the lower year 7 set are KS 2 level – they can't read or write their names properly – they are weak. But as it happens they are my favourite group now. And I think that is through sheer perseverance of trying different teaching styles and through trying to approach them in a different ways. (Female RQT)

I want to be a good teacher. Confident that I can go into every lesson and engage, enthuse and control them, enjoy it and that they will enjoy it too – for especially the next few years, but for all my teaching career. (Female NQT)

Male teachers' student engagement

Some of the newly qualified male teachers we spoke with were very successful in finding ways round issues in learning. Those who were most successful appreciated that teaching the subject matter, at least at the outset, was not always possible and that it was often important to focus on the child rather than the subject. A teacher expressed his surprise at his aptitude for teaching and the affiliation he made with his students:

I'm much better at teaching than I thought I would be. I like children more than I thought I would. The subject is not important – being memorable and exciting is. (Male RQT)

Empathising with and getting to know his students through effective relationships enabled this teacher to adapt his teaching to the particular class.

With some classes you can change your teaching style and approaches, but I think you have to know your class quite well. I'll change my teaching style but the way I address my kids. (Male RQT)

A successful RQT identified the need to focus on the child, despite a clear passion for his subject:

Obviously I have a science degree and I am keen on my subject – but I am here because I like being with kids, not because I love science. (Male RQT)

By the time teachers had reached the end of their second year of teaching, many had come to the realisation that teaching needed to be people-directed, with less emphasis on the subject and more on the students themselves. In so doing, teachers felt that they were able to communicate more effectively with their students and thereby enable students to learn the subject knowledge more successfully:

I've become less interested in science and more interested in learning and people ... As [my PGCE tutor] says "we teach children, not chemistry" and I suppose I'm fitting more and more into that. And science is *a* vehicle ... and they are all means to the same end, which is developing children. (Male RQT)

This same teacher presented this work ethic at a conference and received feedback from colleagues:

But what I'm doing even more now is saying it is about *people* and *not* only about the subject. I did a presentation at UCL and they were really surprised that I didn't say that I became a teacher because I like chemistry. Because I was really emphasising at the end of the day that it is about children – people – and you have got to learn how to handle them and getting chemistry through to them that way. (Male RQT)

For some teachers, a year of teaching brought with it the realisation that it was not always possible to expect motivated students and an automatic willingness to learn. Empathising with students and tuning into their thought processes enabled teachers to overcome the disinterest and lack of motivation of students.

My year 7 group – bottom set have been tough, but I have enjoyed teaching them because I took everything I learned last year from a difficult group and applied it and that's gone really well and positive. (Male RQT)

However, some of the male teachers we spoke to explained how their attitudes to teaching had changed quite dramatically. One such teacher was shocked at the way he had developed as a person in the short space of a year and he began to think very negatively of the students with a shift in his attitude towards them:

I'm probably not as nice to the students as I was last year – I'm quite standoffish. I thought I would always be more jovial and welcoming and it's probably because I don't have as much time. I never thought I'd be the type of teacher to say "come back later I'm having a sandwich" and I'm not all the time, but I've found myself doing it on a few occasions. (Male RQT)

When asked about effective communication with their students, see Mark's point some teachers described their frustration when not being able to communicate the

subject matter to the degree they would have liked, focusing instead on disciplining disruptive students:

Although with some classes I have found it more difficult to be as positive and communicate. As things get harder, you focus more on behaviour and less on quality of teaching, which is not necessarily a good thing – one should focus on both, but with the time constraints that is not going to be as easy... (Male RQT)

A recently qualified male teacher, who was moving to a new school, anticipated the issues that he would encounter:

I imagine the biggest difference unfortunately will be behaviour. Hopefully I will be able to tackle it! ... Discipline – I've got to be concerned because I've not been into such a deprived school before. (Male RQT)

Some teachers spoke of their regrets at not being able to discipline a class at the outset the way they felt they should have done, and of the consequences of those groups:

I've had a year 8 group and because I haven't been strict enough, I've had quite a tough year with them. Individually with those students, I have no problems – a lot are in my tutor group – it's just en masse as a class I struggle. (Male RQT)

Year 11: I suppose have been one of my sources of frustration this year ... And essentially they got worse and worse – less interested in learning, less motivated generally – I tried every attempt possible to help, half of them didn't do any homework for most of the year. There are one or two I ended on a bad relationship and I feel bad as I taught them for two years. Most of them individually are fine – it's just as a class – they won't be quiet and as the GCSEs got closer they actually got worse instead of better. (Male RQT)

Some teachers in their second year felt that because they were no longer NQTs, the support that they had received in their first year of teaching had waned. This teacher was in his second year at a new school:

Support in terms of behaviour hasn't been as good as it was last year ... at the start of the year I struggled with some year 11 classes and struggled until basically they left. It was widely acknowledged that I was given a bit of a raw deal with regard to the class that I was given in my first year here. So although I criticise myself about it and beat myself up a little bit – I knew it was a challenge. Generally I find it quite easy to form good relationships with students and if I hadn't been warned about that it would have hit me quite hard. But because I was warned, I waited and it has developed. (Male RQT)

A male teacher became very disheartened by the lack of enthusiasm for learning:

There are certain classes that don't go as smoothly and aren't learning as much as I would like ... tends to be fewer serious incidents, but more low-level disruptive behaviour, which has a massive knock-on effect for the quality of learning. (Male RQT)

... I haven't been able to establish any kind of decent relationship with the kids. It's a mixed ability class ... It's partly behaviour. It could be time of day – I see them Friday afternoon for a double and they are normally quite weary by then ... There are a group of girls who have a difficult, stormy relationship with one another and they fall out a lot

and what's its meant is that the middle ability kids who were quietly getting on with things have lost motivation ... So it's dragging down the whole class and even the kids who at the start were really well behaved are being silly now. It is disheartening. (Male RQT)

One male teacher reached a low point in his teaching when he encountered very disruptive behaviour:

I'm disappointed by the general level of effort by students. Not just in science, but as a tutor you see the same things repeated in many lessons. If I wasn't a tutor I would probably be quite paranoid and feeling bad about it. But because I see similar patterns across the school, that's what disappoints me – disengaged students and don't seem to have much respect for what they are doing within school. And I have not been as good at behaviour management as I thought I would be. I thought it wouldn't be an issue – rather time management, not doing marking. But because I haven't succeeded with behaviour management, that's probably the thing I'm most disappointed about. (Male RQT)

This same teacher spoke about the slump in his confidence and his thoughts about leaving the profession entirely:

I was hit hard by the year 11 behaviour issue I had. ... I'm quite capable of earning more money in another career. And so why am I taking this from these kids? ... you can go home being very dejected. Another teacher here left the profession in February. Just gave up and for the same reason. He said his relationships with students were okay, probably not brilliant, but he got frustrated with the amount of time that was wasted dealing with discipline issues in the classroom. He left not because it was getting him down, but because he felt his own time was being wasted and didn't want to waste his life battling with people who couldn't be bothered. And even though that's not the reason that people give for leaving the profession, I suppose subconsciously that is the case. They are having a hard time and don't feel like they are getting enough reward and jump ship. (Male RQT)

Some teachers reported what they believed were instances of underserved hostility against them. Such hostility would sometimes emanate from pupils, fellow teachers and even parents:

I was surprised at the hostility and lack of respect and basic manners and standards of behaviour from students and parents and STAFF! (Male)

I am cynical about teaching when: unmotivated pupils is the norm and not the exception; senior staff give teachers unnecessary work which has little effect on pupil motivation and learning; unhelpful and unpleasant parents; new initiatives every five minutes; colleagues who perhaps should not be in teaching; and finally, covering too many lessons. (Male)

I felt that the problems in my classroom were for me alone to resolve, which I couldn't, and thus I felt a failure. (Male)

I lost my self-confidence towards the end of the first year and didn't really get it back again. It became a hard act in the end. (Male)

Despite some very difficult times during the course of their first few years of teaching – times which would have driven many teachers away from the profession – some of the male teachers we spoke to were holding on and learning from their negative experiences:

I'm a bit disappointed with the year group that didn't work out. But I have acknowledged how I need to be next year with discipline ... I'm looking forward to next year and hoping it will be even better. (Male RQT)

When asked about the effectiveness of his communication with students, one male teacher felt that he was making progress both socially and academically:

I still need to learn about communicating science with specifically scientific ideas. Developing the way I use language to explain things. I do always think I'm well enough planned to put my point across that clearly. Otherwise I communicate well – socially and during the lesson and supporting them and making them feel positive. I think it comes with experience as well. There are things that I am teaching this year that I taught last year and I know I am doing a better job. Even though last year I was a bit more positive because I didn't know what I was doing wrong and now I know I'm doing it better but more aware of my faults as well, so probably harder on myself. (Male RQT)

Discussion

In so many spheres of life, such as cognitive psychology (Bandura 1997; Vygotsky 1997), neuropsychology (Damasio 1994; Ledoux 1989), critical theory (Giroux 1997), feminist studies (Boler 1999), and educational philosophy (Noddings 1992), emotion and cognition go hand in hand. Teaching, it seems, is not an exception. We have focused on the importance of incorporating emotional engagement in teaching. Overall, the findings of our research have shown that forming a rapport with the student can instigate and accelerate learning. In times of frustration in the classroom, being able to empathise with the student can enable a teacher to restrain negative feelings such as anger and self-doubt and instead focus on positive feelings – with thoughts focused on the child rather than feeling the need to convey instantly the subject matter. Arguably, in so doing, the time invested in focusing on the child would pay off later with the more ready and willing to engage in learning.

Drawing upon interview data from NQTs, a pattern has emerged that hints at the importance of emotion in teaching (c.f. Dewey 1895, 1933; Hargreaves 1998, 2005; Zembylas 2002, 2005). And rather than delaying the learning process, our data show that incorporating the affective side of teaching can engage students, accelerate their learning and keep them focused. Moreover, this has positive repercussions for the teacher, who is more likely to enjoy their work and consequently remain in teaching.

We looked also at the differences between male and female teachers in their approaches to teaching and in particular when they encountered more challenging classroom scenarios of disengaged students. Drawing on the literature on gender and emotion, which consistently cites females of all ages as having a greater capacity to empathise, we looked to see if female teachers are better equipped at engaging their students.

The interview data show that many of our teachers were able to communicate effectively with their students. However, where this was not the case and there were communication barriers, teachers often became frustrated, disheartened and disillusioned with teaching. Talking with the teachers, we found that the male teachers in particular often felt trapped. Although our sample is small, there are indications from this study that male and female teachers approach teaching in different ways, they visualise the role of emotion in teaching differently, and when faced with challenges and adversities in the classroom, such as disruptive and disengaged students, they employ different strategies to combat them, some more successfully than others.

Female teachers would go to greater lengths, often employing emotion tactics – such as the teacher who spent time showing an interest in her student’s fluffy pens, or who showed an interest in the baby outfit that her student had made in another subject – to win the students back in order to re-engage them in their learning. This finding may be corroborated by the quantitative analysis, which revealed that men felt more controlled generally by the system, and that women attributed more effort and importance to teaching than men did. Such findings suggest that female teachers are more likely to see each child as an individual and tailor their efforts accordingly, whereas male teachers are more inclined to communicate the subject knowledge and hope this will enthuse the student enough to engage him or her. However, our data has shown that this is not always enough, particularly when the student is disengaged.

Some of the male teachers we spoke with related instances where colleagues, also male, had abandoned the profession under such challenging circumstances and even some of those who spoke with us expressed their increasing negative perceptions of teaching. Such negative perceptions echoed the quantitative findings and the danger for many of these teachers is that the negativity overrides the means by which they can pull through.

However, realising that they were not the only ones who encountered such issues and instead, that it was a school-wide issue – with such classes being cause for concern for many teachers – reassured many. In many cases, teachers accepted that they could not tackle such issues alone, and recruited help from parents and teachers. Several teachers were able to reflect on the reasons why they were not successful in conveying their teaching. Lifting the blame from themselves and realising that they were not responsible for student disinterest often alleviated the situation. The teachers who were most successful in distancing themselves, whilst at the same time trying to resolve the issues, were women. This takes us back to the developmental literature and the origins of emotional expression, where boys have been shown to experience less vicarious emotional responsiveness and make greater efforts than girls to hide or deny their emotional responsiveness (Eisenberg et al. 1989) and through to adulthood (e.g. Baron-Cohen 2003) which suggests that whereas women externalise their emotions, men are more likely to internalise theirs. This latter “stiff upper lip” attitude could lead to a harbouring of thoughts and emotions, which could escalate if not dealt with effectively.

When teachers sought alternative ways to communicate their subject, through focusing on the students themselves in an attempt to comprehend their behaviour, success invariably ensued (c.f. Lasky 2005). With a focus on the “who” are we teaching, rather than the “what” are we teaching, teachers seemed to be making a breakthrough. The most successful teachers were also those who appreciated that there was not always a quick fix and that results may take time. Listening to the child – the student voice – was imperative, and incorporating both the affective or emotional and cognitive strands in the classroom, created a healthy balance and steadfast relationships. Letting the student take the lead in order to assess the best teaching method was viewed as a necessary and important starting point.

Many of the aforementioned strategies were used by female teachers, rather than their male counterparts. On the whole, the male teachers seemed to experience more difficulty in asking for help from their colleagues, were more self-critical and less reflective than female teachers. Male teachers also coped less well when confronted with a lack of enthusiasm for learning from their students, thinking less laterally and were less patient than the female teachers. Such negative internalisation of emotion

from male teachers, such as the teacher who felt that if he wasn't a tutor: *would probably be quite paranoid and feeling bad about it*, could arguably adversely affect the teacher–student relationship as well as negatively influence the teacher's and the students' cognitions of learning and ultimately their motivation and behaviour.

In the early years of teaching, when new teachers are still finding their feet, heavy workload and lack of skills and knowledge can hinder their progress and may lead to low self-esteem (Day 2007). Some NQTs are often, and unrealistically, expected to emulate their more experienced counterparts. Where a new teacher does not understand the unreasonable nature of such requests (such as in the case of the teacher who felt he was given a "raw deal" in terms of the challenging class he had been assigned), but instead takes it on themselves to try to live up to these expectations and fails, a sense of worthlessness may result. Such teachers may blame themselves in these instances, and without support to tell them otherwise, may feel that there is something wrong with them (Moore 2004).

Without the appropriate support and encouragement, new teachers can find themselves going into a downward spiral almost before they have begun their careers. Such environments dampen the enthusiasm that new teachers bring to the profession and the danger is that the new teacher, along with their knowledge and innovative ideas, becomes quashed often to a point of no return: *having a hard time and don't feel like they are getting enough reward and jump ship*. Some have suggested that schools need to acquaint themselves with the skills that new teachers bring with them, rather than assuming that they are novices in all aspects of their work (McIntyre 1993). Certainly in the present study, many teachers emphasised the importance of the first year of teaching in order to establish expectations of oneself and the students in terms of discipline and learning. It seems that a whole package of qualities is required of the new teacher, such as patience, time for reflection, communication with others, and persistence.

Many suggestions have been propounded as essential for the development of good teachers. Such ideas have emphasised both the importance of working alongside others – both peers and more experienced teachers – but also the need to work independently and follow one's own teaching style. For example, Moore (2004) believes that constructive and instructive dialogue between novice teachers and their more expert colleagues is essential not least to be able to develop a self-awareness and to have the opportunity to reflect on developing practice with more experienced teachers. Others have highlighted the importance of individuality in teaching and employing one's own original thoughts in their teaching style. For example, Rudduck (1985, 284) has suggested that "good teaching is essentially experimental, and habit, if it is permitted to encroach too far on practice, will erode curiosity and prevent the possibility of experiment".

Needless to say, maintaining a friendly rapport with students, whilst adhering to the remits of being a teacher, requires a fine balance. Teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves 2000, 2005) as well as a cognitive and technical endeavour (Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt 2000). Feelings and emotions have a vital role in the development of learning, because it is through each person's subjective emotional world that she or he develops personal constructs and meanings about outer reality, makes sense of relationships, and understands one's place in the wider world (Day and Leitch 2001).

The importance of being able to think and talk about such issues, as well as others, emerged as vital to staying in teaching. Teachers who bottled up their thoughts and

did not actively seek help and advice found themselves suffering the consequences. Thinking reflectively about one's role and relationships with colleagues and students, whilst being able to put these in perspective, for example, not apportioning all the blame on oneself and shouldering unnecessary burdens, proved positive for young teachers. Such teachers were able to balance school life with home life and provide a fine balance and quality of reflection so that they didn't over immerse themselves in thought to the detriment of their life outside school. Teachers need to be made aware of these aspects of teaching during their PGCE courses – if not before they embark on the course – so that they know exactly what they might become exposed to and whether they are suitably emotionally equipped. Often the reality is very different from the teaching course and preconceptions may be dashed. It is very important therefore to make these possibilities known as soon as possible so that student teachers are content with their choice of career. In order to prevent it becoming "... a hard act in the end", we need to ensure that adequate provision is made for our teachers when they are faced with the inevitable challenges. As well as the vital need to impart knowledge, there needs to be an awareness and incorporation of emotional engagement in the classroom breathing life into the ever-evolving process of teaching and learning.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Your early career years

1. Why did you choose teaching as a profession?

Adjusting to school life

2. Did you find it easy to fit in to school life?
3. How much in control did you feel?
4. What was out of your control?
5. How important would you say are relationships with students and colleagues in the first year of teaching?
6. If you experienced difficulties, whom did you seek help/advice from?
7. What support did you receive? Was it too much/too little/inappropriate?
8. What changes could be made in schools that might make new teachers lives easier?

Your teaching

9. What was for you an ideal lesson?
10. Do you think that you communicated well with your students?
11. What did you do when things didn't go as well as you had planned?
12. How well prepared did you feel when you started working as a teacher?
13. What surprises did you encounter?
14. Is there anything that would have been helpful to know in advance?
15. Did you have concerns about the following? [please tick as appropriate]
 - ☐ Maintaining discipline in the classroom
 - ☐ Time/workload
 - ☐ Parents
 - ☐ Self-confidence
 - ☐ Classroom management
 - ☐ Attainment
 - ☐ Marking
 - ☐ Subject knowledge
 - ☐ Assessment
 - ☐ Discipline
 - ☐ OFSTED
 - ☐ Staff relationships
 - ☐ Student relationships
 - ☐ Meeting demands of job
 - ☐ Mentor

Please expand on any of these points if you can.

16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements and please explain your reasons.
A teacher really can't do much because most of the students' motivation and performance depends on external factors.

.....
.....
.....

If I tried really hard I could get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.

.....
.....
.....

17. What have you learnt about yourself/about teaching?
18. Did you find time for reflection (i.e. examining your beliefs, rethinking your practice and learning from experience as to the best ways of coping in the future)?
19. If you could start your NQT year all over again, what would you do differently?
20. What is the most important thing you learnt during your first year of teaching?
21. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements and please explain your reasons.
☐ I was first and foremost a teacher of (subject).
☐ I was first and foremost a teacher of children who happened to teach (subject).

Have you changed career again?

22. What are the main reasons do you think that led you to stop teaching?
23. Did you foresee any of the problems that you encountered with teaching?
24. What are you doing now? Is it in any way teacher-related?
25. Do you think that you would ever reconsider a career in teaching?
26. What would you like to be doing in 3 and 10 years time?

Please feel free to expand on any of these questions or to add any other comments and thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix 2. Teacher well-being questionnaire

About this questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. Your views will feed into a large survey which is collecting information from teachers at all stages of their careers to try to understand what motivates, challenges and enables teachers to flourish.

The information you provide will remain confidential and will be used to help to develop a model of teacher well-being. Please provide your email address at the end of the questionnaire if you would like to receive a copy of the final full report.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this.

Elaine Wilson, senior lecturer in science education, Email: ew208@cam.ac.uk

Your details

Gender Male / Female

School.....

What is your current post?.....

How long have you held this post?.....

Have you held other teaching posts?Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, please specify how many

How many staff are there in your department? FT..... PT.....

What is the subject of your first degree?.....

What subjects do you teach?.....

How many years have you been teaching?.....

Compared to when you started teaching would you say that the job of a teacher is?

Much easier ☐ easier ☐ about the same ☐ slightly worse ☐ much worse ☐

Have you changed your career to enter the teaching profession?

Yes? What was your previous occupation?

What was the main reason for you joining the teaching profession?

A. How you feel about your work place (basic needs scale)

The following questions concern your feelings about your job during the last year.

Please indicate how true each of the following statement is for you given your experiences in this job.	Not at all true		Somewhat true			Very true	
1. I feel like I can make a lot of input to deciding how my job gets done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I really like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I do not feel very competent when I am at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. People at work tell me I am good at what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel pressured at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I get along with people at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I pretty much keep to myself when I am at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I consider the people I work with to be my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. When I am at work, I have to do what I am told.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My feelings are taken into consideration at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. People at work care about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. There are not many people at work that I am close to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I feel like I can pretty much be myself at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. The people I work with do not seem to like me much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. When I am working I often do not feel very capable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to go about my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. People at work are pretty friendly towards me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B. The climate at work (autonomy support scale: work climate)

These questions are related to your experience with the manager who is your most immediate supervisor.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly disagree		Neutral			Strongly agree	
1. I feel that my manager provides me with choices and options.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I feel understood by my manager.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am able to be open with my manager at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My manager conveys confidence in my ability to do well at my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel that my manager accepts me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My manager makes sure I really understood the goals of my job and what I need to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My manager encourages me to ask questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel a lot of trust in my manager	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My manager answers my questions fully and carefully	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My manager listens to how I would like to do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My manager handles people's emotions very well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I feel that my manager cares about me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I don't feel very good about the way my manager talks to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My manager tries to understand how I see things before suggesting a new way to do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I feel able to share my feelings with my manager.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C. How you feel about your job (perceived competence scale/intrinsic motivation inventory)

Please indicate how true each of the following statement is for you.	Not at all true		Somewhat true			Very true	
1. I feel confident in my ability to manage classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am capable of managing my classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am able to manage all my own classes now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I feel able to meet the challenge of managing my classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel confident in having good subject knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I am capable of explaining my subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I feel able to teach my subject well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel able to meet the challenge of teaching science.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I put a lot of effort into teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I try very hard to plan thoroughly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. It is important for me to plan thoroughly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I don't put much energy into planning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I don't feel nervous at all while teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I feel very tense when I am teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I am very relaxed when I am teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I am anxious when teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I feel pressured when I am teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I believe that what I am doing is worthwhile.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I believe that what I am doing is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I enjoy what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I believe my job is intellectually challenging.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

D. How you respond to challenges in your job (general causality orientation scale)

Please indicate which response is the most likely to be the case for you.

1. You have been offered a new position in the school. The first question that is likely to come to mind is:

	Very unlikely		Moderately likely			Very likely	
(a) What if I can't live up to the new responsibility?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b) Will I make more at this position?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c) I hope the new work will be interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Following a job interview you are told that the position has been filled by someone else. It is likely that you might think:

	Very unlikely		Moderately likely			Very likely	
(a) It's not what you know, but who you know.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b) I'm probably not good enough for the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c) Somehow they didn't see my qualifications as matching their needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. You are asked to plan a school trip. Your style for approaching this project could most likely be characterised as:

	Very unlikely		Moderately likely			Very likely	
(a) Take charge: that is, you would make most of the major decisions yourself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b) Follow precedent: you're not really up to the task so you'd do it the way it's been done before.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c) Seek participation: get inputs from others who want to make them before you make the final plans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. If you were to embark on a new career. The most important consideration is likely to be:

	Very unlikely		Moderately likely			Very likely	
(a) Whether you can do the work without getting in over your head.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b) How interested you are in that kind of work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c) Whether there are good possibilities for advancement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. A colleague you share a class with has generally done an adequate job. However, for the past two weeks their work has not been up to par and he/she appears to be less actively interested in their work. Your reaction is likely to be:

	Very unlikely		Moderately likely			Very likely	
(a) Tell them that their work is below what is expected and that they should start working harder.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(b) Ask them about the problem and let them know you are available to help work it out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c) It's hard to know what to do to get them straightened out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate which response is the most likely to be the case for you.

6. If you had a school age child and at a parent evening the teacher tells you that your child is doing badly and does not seem to be involved in the work. You are likely to:

	Very unlikely		Moderately likely			Very likely	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(a) Talk it over with your child to understand further what the problem is							
(b) Tell her off and hope he/she gets better	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(c) Make sure he/she does her homework, because she should be working harder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix 3. The interview

Why did you go into teaching in the first place?

Have you found it easy to fit in?

How prepared did you feel when starting work as a teacher?

Do you think that you cope well?

How much in control do you feel?

How much is out of your control?

If there is a problem, who do you seek help/advice from?

What support do you receive? Is it too much/too little/inappropriate?

How important would you say are relationships with students and colleagues in the first year of teaching?

What for you is an ideal lesson?

Do you think that you communicate well with your students?

Do you have concerns about?

- Maintaining discipline in the classroom
- Time/workload
- Parents
- Self-confidence
- Classroom management
- Attainment
- Marking
- Subject knowledge
- Assessment
- Discipline
- OFSTED
- Staff relationships
- Student relationships
- Meeting demands of job
- Mentor

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements and explain your reasons?

- A teacher really can't do much because most of the students' motivation and performance depends on external factors.
- If I try really hard I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.

What surprises have you encountered?

What do you do when things don't go as well as you had planned?

Is there anything that would have been helpful to know in advance?

What have you learnt about yourself/about teaching?

Do you find time for reflection (i.e. examining your beliefs, rethinking your practice and learning from experience as to the best ways of coping in the future)?

Do you wish you had more time for reflection?

If you could start your NQT year all over again, what would you do differently?

What is the most important thing you have learnt during this year?

Which of the following statements do you agree with and why?

- I am first and foremost a teacher of (subject).
- I am first and foremost a teacher of children who happens to teach

What changes would you make for teachers going into teaching for the first time?

Have you felt welcomed by colleagues in your department and the school as a whole?

Could the structure and nature of the department have been improved to make you feel more welcomed?

Do you feel a part of the school and fully involved/integrated?

Is there anything that could be done/said to make you feel more “at home”?

Have there been times when you have felt the need to manufacture or suppress emotions when circumstances seemed to demand it?

Can you recall in detail vivid moments and experiences of positive and negative emotions in relation to interactions with colleagues, students, parents and administrators?

Have certain aspects of identity (e.g. gender, age, etc.) affected your own experiences and expressions of emotion; and have these emotional phenomena manifested themselves amongst people with whom you have interacted from different age-groups, cultures or genders?

What would you like to be doing in 3 and 10 years time?

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